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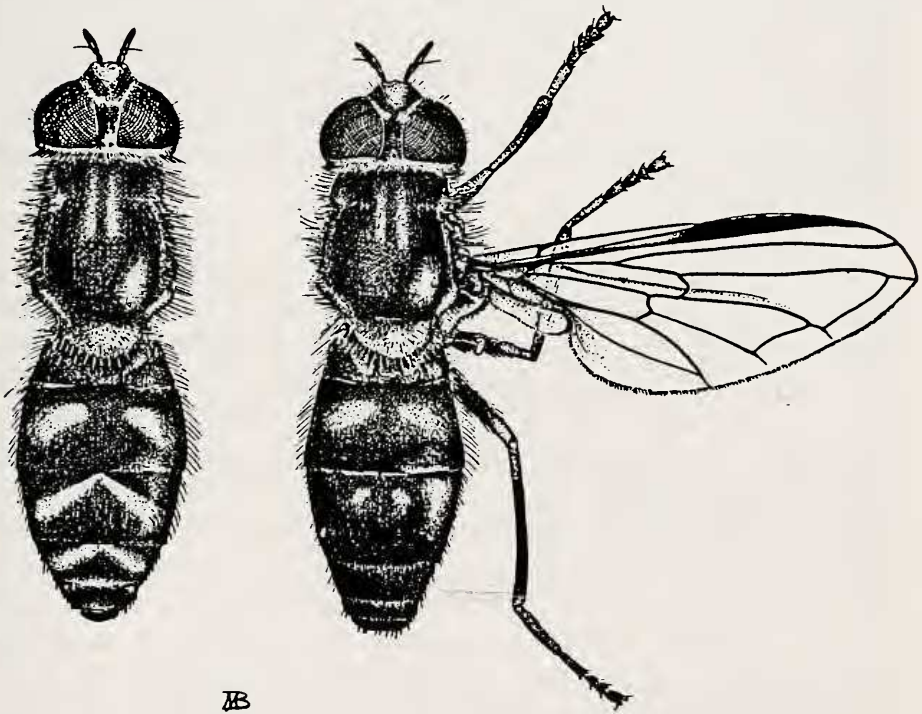


Fig. 1 *Dasysyrphus albostriatus* Fall. Spring specimen on right.

DAHLICA (=SOLENOBIA) TRIQUETRELLA HBN. (LEP.: PSYCHIDAE) IN SOUTH ESSEX — It seems worth recording the presence of this species at Grays Chalk Quarry, South Essex during May 1986, when I collected two cases from the underside of a single piece of "breeze-block" dumped at the side of a hardcore track. The only previous record for either of the two Essex vice-counties appears to be that made by the Rev. C. R. N. Burrows who took cases at Mucking in 1919. However, both Hattenschwiler (in *Moths*

and *Butterflies of the British Isles* vol. 2 Harley Books, 1985) and Emmet (*The Smaller Moths of Essex* Essex Field Club, 1981) regard this as a doubtful record. Elsewhere in Britain, where only the parthenogenetic form of the female is encountered, there are confirmed records from the West Kent and Westmoreland vice-counties alone – a rather remarkable, and highly improbable, disjunct distribution – with further unconfirmed reports from Durham, South Lancashire and Cheshire. It seems quite possible that diligent searching will eventually add to the vice-county distribution map for this species.

The two cases from Grays measure 8.5×2.8 mm and 7.9×2.5 mm respectively, (maximum measurements). The use of the native chalk, as well as tiny particles of concrete to decorate the cases has rendered them highly cryptic against the breeze-blocks upon which they were found. Once detected however, there is no other British Pyschid whose case is markedly triangular in section, tapered at *both* ends, constructed of “sand” grains rather than lichen and adorned with the remains of dead insects at the head end. I am grateful to Lt. Col. Emmet for confirming my identification of these two cases. COLIN PLANT, Passmore Edwards Museum, Romford Road, Stratford, London E15 4LZ.

GEOSTIBA CIRCELLARIS GRAV. (COL.: STAPHYLINIDAE), A RIVAL TO THE BOMBADIER BEETLE? – For some years now I have been investigating the Coleoptera of moss and leaf litter, and have frequently encountered *Geostiba circellaris* – the first occasion being some 20 years ago in Black Wood, Rannoch. It is my custom to examine handfulls of moss or litter one at a time on a tray, using a small brush to ease beetles into a tube. I noticed at times a fleeting but markedly unpleasant, rather lavatorial smell, apparently associated with a small staphylinid that I later identified as *circellaris*. When “attacked” by a small brush a beetle would become agitated, sometimes stopping and elevating its abdomen and emitting a vapour which could clearly be smelt. The abdomen is occasionally raised when the beetle is on the move.

I have since observed this behaviour in specimens from many localities, from southern England to the Scottish highlands. Presumably the function of this behaviour is defensive, but I have not observed similar behaviour in other staphylinids. Species of the genus *Zyras* are reported to behave in a similar manner, but I have only rarely come across this genus, and all specimens have behaved normally – perhaps they only emit vapours in the presence of ants or other predators? Perhaps other coleopterists have noticed similar behaviour in other staphylinids? P. D. ORTON, 22 Lyewater, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 8BB.